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NSC BRIEFING

DIRECTOR'S COPY  
23 March 1960

FRANCE

- I. De Gaulle's blunt rejection of demands by a majority in the National Assembly for a special parliamentary session to discuss agricultural policy has produced a new high in domestic political criticism of the De Gaulle regime.
  - A. Hostile reaction extends into all parties, even government coalition.
  - B. De Gaulle will probably face no large-scale public displays of hostility until after Khrushchev visit (23 March to 3 April), but will then probably face new farmer demonstrations and efforts to topple De Gaulle government.
    1. Next session of parliament scheduled for 26 April.
- II. Opposition to De Gaulle, long-evident among rightist elements, only recently has become vocal in responsible left and center parties.
  - A. Left and center parties had previously de-emphasized their opposition to some of De Gaulle's policies in order to give him a free hand in Algeria, but now feel they must speak out if they are not to risk further loss of political influence.
  - B. Left and center believe De Gaulle has now moved away from attempts to achieve early solution in Algeria.
  - C. Rightist parties, long convinced De Gaulle is unable to solve Algerian problem, have been steadily moving into overt opposition with an eye to the post-De Gaulle period.
- III. Fundamental deterrent to an all-out campaign against De Gaulle is still the lack of a ready alternative.

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- A. Since opposition has no easy mechanism to "get" De Gaulle (constitution does not allow parliament to oust president), the Debre government will bear the brunt of the attack.
  - B. Our embassy in Paris doubts that De Gaulle's opponents can muster an absolute majority to oust Debre at next session.
- IV. Increased parliamentary obstructionism to his policies may well lead De Gaulle--who is already irritated with the "politicians" and the nearly unanimously critical press--even further toward one-man government.
- A. In 1946 when faced with parliamentary frustrations, De Gaulle retired in disgust to Colombey des Deux Eglises, and a repeat performance, while it seems most unlikely, is not impossible.
  - B. A major factor today, however, is that De Gaulle, unlike in 1946, now has a constitution which gives him the power to run France while ignoring parliament.

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